

# Kay Ivey

**Kay Ellen Ivey** (born October 15, 1944) is an American politician serving as the 54th and current governor of Alabama since 2017. A member of the Republican Party, she was the 38th Alabama State Treasurer from 2003 to 2011 and the 30th lieutenant governor of Alabama from 2011 to 2017.

Ivey became Alabama's second female governor and first female Republican governor upon the resignation of her predecessor, Robert J. Bentley. She won a full term in the 2018 gubernatorial election by a wide margin against challenger Walt Maddox.

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## Early life and education

Ivey was born on October 15, 1944, in Camden, Alabama, as the only child<sup>[1]</sup> to Boadman Nettles Ivey (1913–1997)<sup>[2]</sup> and Barbara Elizabeth (Nettles) Ivey (1915–1998).<sup>[3]</sup><sup>[4]</sup> Her father was an army

### Kay Ivey



### 54th Governor of Alabama

#### Incumbent

#### Assumed office

April 10, 2017

**Lieutenant** Will Ainsworth

**Preceded by** Robert Bentley

### 30th Lieutenant Governor of Alabama

#### In office

January 17, 2011 – April 10, 2017

**Governor** Robert Bentley

**Preceded by** Jim Folsom Jr.

**Succeeded by** Will Ainsworth

### 38th Treasurer of Alabama

#### In office

January 20, 2003 – January 17, 2011

**Governor** Bob Riley

**Preceded by** Lucy Baxley

**Succeeded by** Young Boozer

### Personal details

**Born** Kay Ellen Ivey  
October 15, 1944

major in World War II, who later worked with the Gees Bend community as part of a federal program, the Farmers Home Administration.<sup>[1]</sup>

Growing up in Camden, Ivey worked on her father's farm. She graduated from Auburn University, where she was a member of Alpha Gamma Delta, becoming president of her first-year pledge class,<sup>[5]</sup> and served in the Student Government Association all four years.<sup>[5]</sup> Ivey participated in a blackface skit while at Auburn, for which she later apologized.<sup>[6]</sup>

In 1967, Ivey moved to California following a marriage and became a high school teacher for several years.<sup>[5]</sup> Following the end of her marriage, she returned to Alabama and landed a position with Merchants National Bank, where she launched a school relations program to promote financial literacy.<sup>[5]</sup> Ivey has been divorced twice and has no children.<sup>[7]</sup>

	Camden, Alabama, U.S.
<b>Political party</b>	<u>Republican</u> (since 2002)
<b>Other political affiliations</b>	<u>Democratic</u> (before 2002)
<b>Residence</b>	<u>Governor's Mansion</u>
<b>Education</b>	<u>Auburn University</u> (BA)
<b>Signature</b>	

## Entry into politics



Ivey after being sworn in as State Treasurer in 2003

In 1979, she was appointed by then-Governor Fob James to serve in the state cabinet.<sup>[5]</sup> She later served as the reading clerk of the Alabama House of Representatives between 1980 and 1982 and served as Assistant Director of the Alabama Development Office between 1982 and 1985.<sup>[8]</sup>

In 1982, Ivey ran unsuccessfully for State Auditor as a Democrat.<sup>[9]</sup> She was Director of Government Affairs and Communications for the Alabama Commission on Higher Education from 1985 until 1998.<sup>[10]</sup>

### State Treasurer (2003–2011)

Ivey took office as state treasurer in 2003, after defeating Stephen Black, the grandson of former United States Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black, in the 2002 general election, by a margin of 52–48%.<sup>[11]</sup> In 2006, Ivey was re-elected over Democrat Steve Segrest by a 60–40 margin.<sup>[12]</sup> She was the first Republican elected state treasurer since Reconstruction.<sup>[13]</sup>

As Treasurer, Ivey also oversaw the near complete financial collapse of the Prepaid Affordable College Tuition (PACT) program. Under this program tens of thousands of Alabama families were assured by the state that their investment in the program would guarantee their children four years of tuition at any state college.<sup>[5]</sup> Following the program's inception, many of the state's colleges increased the cost of tuition at triple the inflation rate



Ivey is sworn into a second term as State Treasurer by Jeff Sessions in 2007

(or more), so the program became financially unsustainable and was subsequently bailed out by the Alabama state legislature.<sup>[14]</sup> This unprecedented and unforeseen increase in tuition was not taken into account when the program was developed.

## Lieutenant Governor (2011–2017)

Under the Alabama Constitution, Ivey was not eligible to seek reelection to a third term as state treasurer in 2010.<sup>[15]</sup> Her name surfaced in press speculation about gubernatorial candidates in 2010.<sup>[16][17]</sup>

In 2009, Ivey announced her candidacy for the Republican nomination for governor in the 2010 elections, joining a crowded field of seven Republican candidates.<sup>[18][19]</sup> In March 2010, Ivey abandoned her run for governor and qualified to run for lieutenant governor.<sup>[20]</sup> She ran against State Senator Hank Erwin of Montevallo and schoolteacher Gene Ponder of Baldwin County for the Republican nomination.<sup>[21]</sup> In the June 2010 primary election, Ivey won the nomination with 56.6% of the vote, to Erwin's 31.4% and Ponder's 12%.<sup>[22]</sup>

In the November 2010 elections, in a Republican sweep of statewide offices, Ivey defeated Democratic incumbent Lieutenant Governor Jim Folsom Jr., who had sought an unprecedented fourth term. Ivey received 764,112 votes to Folsom's 718,636.<sup>[23]</sup>

In 2014, Ivey was challenged in the Republican primary by pastor Stan Cooke of Jefferson County.<sup>[24]</sup> Ivey received the support of major lobbying groups, such as the Business Council of Alabama, Alabama Retail Association, Alabama Farmers Federation, and Alabama Forestry Association.<sup>[25]</sup> Ivey defeated Cooke in the primary, with 257,588 votes (61.68%) to Cooke's 160,023 (38.32%).<sup>[26]</sup> In the general election, Ivey faced Democratic nominee James C. Fields, a former state legislator.<sup>[27]</sup> In November 2014, Ivey won reelection with 738,090 votes to Fields's 428,007.<sup>[28]</sup> This marked the first time a Republican was reelected lieutenant governor in the state's history.<sup>[29]</sup>



Ivey with Martha Roby, Robert J. Bentley, and Terri Sewell in 2014

## Governor of Alabama (2017–present)

### Taking office and first months as governor

Ivey was sworn in as governor following the resignation of Robert Bentley on April 10, 2017. She is the second female governor in the state's history. The first was Lurleen Wallace, the wife of George Wallace; she was governor for about 16 months in 1967 and 1968, until her death from cancer.<sup>[29]</sup>

In April 2017, Ivey signed a bill into law that barred judges from overruling a jury's recommendation on the death penalty in sentencing in capital murder cases. Previously Alabama had been the only state with a "judicial override" that allowed a judge to sentence a defendant to death when a jury had recommended a sentence of life without parole. Before the bill was passed, Alabama's capital sentencing scheme was viewed as likely to be struck down as unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court.<sup>[30][31]</sup>

In May 2017, Ivey signed into law:

- a bill to speed up death-penalty appeals and hasten executions in Alabama.<sup>[32]</sup>

- a bill barring the removal of any monuments on public display, or the renaming of any public street or building, that had existed for 40 years or more—effectively protecting the state's Confederate monuments.<sup>[33]</sup>
- a bill banning crossover voting (the practice of casting a ballot in one party's primary election and then casting a ballot in other party's runoff elections).<sup>[34]</sup>
- a bill allowing faith-based adoption agencies to refuse to place children with gay couples. This bill was criticized by the Human Rights Campaign.<sup>[35][36]</sup>

In September 2017, Ivey announced that she was running for election to a full term in the 2018 gubernatorial election.<sup>[37]</sup>

## Roy Moore and the 2017 special election for U.S. Senate

Former U.S. Senator Jeff Sessions (R-AL) resigned from that office in February 2017 to serve as U.S. Attorney General, whereupon then-Governor Bentley chose Luther Strange to succeed Sessions in the Senate until a special election, which Bentley controversially scheduled to align with the 2018 general election instead of sooner.<sup>[38][39]</sup> When Ivey succeeded Bentley, she rescheduled the special election for December 12, 2017.<sup>[40]</sup>

After former Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore won the Republican nomination for that U.S. Senate seat, *The Washington Post* published an article revealing allegations of sexual abuse against minors by Moore, which caused many Republican voters and groups in Alabama to withdraw their support for him. There began to be discussion as to whether Ivey would delay the election to allow the Republicans to field an alternative candidate. Ivey subsequently said: "The election date is set for December 12. Were [Strange] to resign I would simply appoint somebody to fill the remaining time until we have the election on December 12."<sup>[41]</sup> Ivey stated on November 17 that although she had no reason to disbelieve the allegations, she intended to vote for Moore to protect the Republican majority in the U.S. Senate, a statement for which she was criticized.<sup>[42][43][44]</sup> Moore lost the special election to former U.S. Attorney and Democratic nominee Doug Jones.<sup>[45]</sup> On December 28 Ivey and Alabama Secretary of State John Merrill certified the senatorial election result despite an attempt by the Moore campaign to delay certification over unsubstantiated accusations of voter fraud.<sup>[46]</sup>

## Economic policy

On April 6, 2018, Ivey signed a bill exempting economic development professionals from registering as lobbyists under the Alabama ethics law. The bill was sponsored by Ken Johnson and would have died if not signed by Ivey over the weekend. Ivey said the legislation would allow the state "to remain on a level playing field with other states, as we compete for job creating capital investments" and Alabama's ability to attract highly sought-after economic development projects would allow the state to continue experiencing "record-low unemployment".<sup>[47]</sup> On April 9, Ivey signed a bill extending the reach of the Simplified Sellers Use Tax to capture purchases from third-party vendors selling products through Amazon and other online marketplaces. In a press release, Ivey said the legislation would "help bring about a competitive balance between brick-and-mortar retailers in Alabama and third-party online sellers, while streamlining the collection of use taxes that are currently due on online transactions."<sup>[48]</sup>

In a June letter to United States Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, Ivey wrote that she opposed "any



Ivey in July 2017

efforts that may harm those companies that employ thousands of Alabamians and contribute billions to our economy" and advocated for Ross to "not recommend to President Trump the levying of trade tariffs on automobiles and automotive parts."<sup>[49]</sup> In August, Ivey named Kelly Butler as Alabama acting finance director, saying that Butler would serve until the completion of a search for a permanent director and would "do an excellent job leading the Alabama Department of Finance during this interim period."<sup>[50]</sup>

## Education policy

In October 2018, Ivey announced her intent to form an advisory council with the purpose of studying ways to improve science, technology, engineering and math instruction in schools to meet an expectation of strong job demands over the following decade. Ivey said that STEM-related jobs were expected to grow faster than most other forms of employment while paying a median wage roughly twice as large as jobs in other fields and that the Governor's Advisory Council for Excellence in STEM would include educators and representatives of government, business and industry who would give her a comprehensive report on the matter by the end of the year.<sup>[51]</sup>

## Firearm policy

In May 2018, Ivey signed a memo authorizing Alabama school administrators to have guns at schools if they qualified under the Alabama Sentry Program, and thereby be granted permission to "use lethal force to defend the students, faculty, staff, and visitors of his or her school from the threat of imminent bodily harm or death by an armed intruder." In her announcement of the policy, Ivey said, "With the unfortunate continuance of occurrence of school violence in our schools across the nation, we simply cannot afford to wait until the next legislative session."<sup>[52]</sup> The proposal received criticism from members of both parties, with Republican Mayor of Huntsville Tommy Battle dismissing it as a "one size fits all" plan and Democratic Mayor of Tuscaloosa Walter Maddox suggesting that the program was flawed.<sup>[53]</sup>

## Abortion

In August 2018, after the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals issued a ruling that blocked the Alabama Unborn Child Protection from Dismemberment Act, Ivey reflected on her support for the state law while serving as lieutenant governor and said that "we should not let this discourage our steadfast commitment to protect the lives of the unborn, even if that means taking this case to the U.S. Supreme Court." She added that the ruling "clearly demonstrates why we need conservative justices on the Supreme Court" and expressed her support for the confirmation of Justice Brett Kavanaugh.<sup>[54]</sup> The United States Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal of the 11th Circuit Court's ruling. The American Civil Liberties Union represented those opposing appeal. ACLU attorney Andrew Beck said, "While we are pleased to see the end of this particular case, we know that it is nowhere near the end of efforts to undermine access to abortion."<sup>[55]</sup> On May 15, 2019, Ivey signed the even more restrictive House Bill 314, which intended to criminalize abortion as of November 2019 except in cases where the mother's life is threatened or the fetus may not survive. It mandated prison sentences of up to 99 years for physicians performing such surgery.<sup>[56]</sup> The bill intentionally contradicts the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in Roe v. Wade that laws banning abortion before fetal viability are unconstitutional, and is expected to be challenged in court.<sup>[57]</sup> The legislation has also gained notoriety for not allowing exceptions in cases of rape or incest.<sup>[58]</sup> On October 29, shortly before the law was to take effect, a federal judge blocked the statute. Ivey and Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall said they expected the Supreme Court would overturn the ruling on appeal.<sup>[59]</sup>

## Health care policy

In March 2018, Ivey announced that Alabama would seek permission to put work or job-training requirements on the Medicaid benefits for roughly 75,000 able-bodied adults whose incomes were just a few hundred dollars a month. She asserted that the work requirements would "save taxpayer dollars and will reserve Medicaid services for those that are truly in need of assistance."<sup>[60]</sup> In September, Ivey said that everyone wanted "high-quality medicine at an affordable cost available to everybody" but that enacting the policy would require figuring out how to pay for it.<sup>[61]</sup>

On October 1, Ivey announced that the federal government had approved a new care-management program in Alabama to complement and enhance the state's current system of long-term care services provided to approximately 23,000 Alabama Medicaid recipients. She called the approval "a significant step in our efforts to transform the delivery of services to Medicaid recipients" and said it was her goal "to ensure that all Alabamians receive high-quality health care, no matter their economic status."<sup>[62]</sup>

Ivey opposes Medicaid expansion, saying in 2018 that it was "not an issue we can tackle at this point."<sup>[63][64]</sup>

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Ivey declared a state of emergency on March 13.<sup>[65]</sup> She was reluctant to issue a stay-at-home order.<sup>[66]</sup> On March 28, Lieutenant Governor Ainsworth wrote an open letter criticizing Ivey's actions in regard to the pandemic as inadequate.<sup>[67]</sup> Ivey issued a stay-at-home order on April 3 to take effect the following day.<sup>[68]</sup>

## Environmental policy

In October 2018, Ivey appointed Ruby L. Perry and Kevin McKinstry to the Alabama Environmental Management Commission.<sup>[69]</sup>

## Personal life

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Ivey has been married and divorced twice, and has no children.<sup>[70]</sup> Her first marriage was to Ben LaRavia; they became engaged while studying at Auburn University.<sup>[71]</sup>

In 2019, Ivey was diagnosed with lung cancer. She received an outpatient treatment at the University of Alabama at Birmingham on September 20, 2019. She said, "I am confident of God's plan and purpose for my life."<sup>[72]</sup> Ivey was declared cancer-free in January 2020. The cancer was Stage I and responded well to radiation treatment.<sup>[73]</sup>

## Electoral history

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Republican primary results<sup>[74]</sup>

Party	Candidate	Votes	%
<u>Republican</u>	<b>Kay Ivey (incumbent)</b>	<b>330,743</b>	<b>56.1%</b>
<u>Republican</u>	Tommy Battle	146,887	24.9%
<u>Republican</u>	Scott Dawson	79,302	13.5%
<u>Republican</u>	Bill Hightower	29,275	5.0%
<u>Republican</u>	Michael McAllister	3,326	0.6%
<b>Total votes</b>		<b>589,533</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Alabama gubernatorial election, 2018<sup>[75]</sup>

Party	Candidate	Votes	%	±
<u>Republican</u>	<b>Kay Ivey (incumbent)</b>	<b>1,022,457</b>	<b>59.46%</b>	<b>−4.10%</b>
<u>Democratic</u>	Walt Maddox	694,495	40.39%	+4.15%
<i>n/a</i>	Write-ins	2,637	0.15%	−0.05%
<b>Total votes</b>		<b>'1,719,589'</b>	<b>'100.0%'</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<u>Republican</u> <b>hold</b>				

## See also

- List of female governors in the United States
- List of female lieutenant governors in the United States

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## External links

- Governor of Alabama (<http://governor.alabama.gov>) official government site
- Kay Ivey for Lt. Governor (<http://www.kayivey.org/>) official campaign site
- Kay Ivey ([https://curlie.org/Regional/North\\_America/United\\_States/Alabama/Government/Executive/Governor\\_Kay\\_Ivey](https://curlie.org/Regional/North_America/United_States/Alabama/Government/Executive/Governor_Kay_Ivey)) at Curlie
- Biography (<http://www.archives.state.al.us/conoff/ivey.html>) at the Alabama Department of Archives and History
- Appearances (<https://www.c-span.org/person/?91206>) on C-SPAN
- Kay Ivey (<https://twitter.com/GovernorKayIvey>) on Twitter

Political offices		
Preceded by <b><u>Lucy Baxley</u></b>	<b><u>Treasurer of Alabama</u></b> 2003–2011	Succeeded by <b><u>Young Boozer</u></b>
Preceded by <b><u>Jim Folsom</u></b>	<b><u>Lieutenant Governor of Alabama</u></b> 2011–2017	<b><u>Vacant</u></b> Title next held by <b><u>Will Ainsworth</u></b>
Preceded by <b><u>Robert J. Bentley</u></b>	<b><u>Governor of Alabama</u></b> 2017–present	<b><u>Incumbent</u></b>
Party political offices		
Preceded by <b><u>Robert J. Bentley</u></b>	<b><u>Republican nominee for Governor of Alabama</u></b> 2018	<b><u>Most recent</u></b>
U.S. order of precedence (ceremonial)		
Preceded by <b><u>Mike Pence</u></b> <i>as <u>Vice President</u></i>	<b><u>Order of Precedence of the United States</u></b> Within Alabama	Succeeded by <b><u>Mayor of city</u></b> in which event is held
		Succeeded by <b><u>Otherwise Nancy Pelosi</u></b> <i>as <u>Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives</u></i>
Preceded by <b><u>J. B. Pritzker</u></b> <i>as <u>Governor of Illinois</u></i>	<b><u>Order of Precedence of the United States</u></b> Outside Alabama	Succeeded by <b><u>Janet Mills</u></b> <i>as <u>Governor of Maine</u></i>

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